Reflection Prompts Week 2

Monday’s Readings:

**Republic Book I, 336a-end**
- What does Thrasyvachus say justice is?
- What evidence does he present in support of this definition?
- Look up the definitions of ethical relativism on p. 351 of your coursepack, would you agree with your instructor that Thrasyvachus is essentially suggesting a very cynical view of a social conventionalist account of justice?
- Offer your own critique of Thrasyvachus’ conception of justice

**Malcolm X’s “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech**
- On my interpretation of the speech, Malcolm X is arguing that American justice is merely a form of social conventionalism in the jaded Thrasyvachus sense, what evidence does Malcolm X present to show that American ‘justice’ is, in actuality, simply whatever serves the interests of the white majority?
- Do you find Malcolm X argument convincing? Why or why not?
- What does Malcolm X mean by the economic and political philosophy of Black Nationalism? Do you agree that this is a just or reasonable response to the how African-Americans were being treated in 1964? What about now?

Wednesday’s Reading:

**Republic Book II, especially 357a-367e**
- Briefly describe Glaucon’s story about the two rings of Gyges. How does Glaucon use this story to “renew” Thrasyvachus’ argument that acting justly is almost never in one’s own best interest? (358b-d) Do you agree with the conclusion that Glaucon and Adeimantus draw from this story, namely, that any rational person would act unjustly if there were no human or divine penalties for doing so?

Friday’s Reading:

**Republic Book II, III and IV**
- Try to find Plato’s definition of the just man and the just city. Given this definition, is it true that one would pursue justice for its own sake? In other words, does Plato’s definition meet Glaucon’s challenge?
- What aspects of Plato’s city did you find the most appealing? The most alarming?